

LOOK MAGAZINE 17 NOVEMBER 1970 (3)

W. AVERELL HARRIMAN SAYS:

"VIETNAMIZATION IS IMMORAL"

When negotiations with the North Vietnamese began in Paris on May 10, 1968, President Johnson asked Cyrus Vance and myself to handle them. Cy had been Deputy Secretary of Defense. He had also undertaken troubleshooting assignments for the President in Cyprus, Korea and at home during the summer riots of 1967. Cy was more than a deputy, he was my partner throughout the long and frustrating months. And no one could have had a better one.

After nearly six months' discussion, President Johnson was able to stop the bombing at the end of October, 1968. Throughout this period, President Thieu of South Vietnam had never indicated that he was not willing to join the talks in Paris. We had considerable difficulty in getting the other side to agree to negotiate with his representative. They seemed to have a special bitterness toward Thieu, as they had been fighting him for years, way back to the period when they considered him a mercenary of the French.

For our part, we refused to accept the NLF as independent participants. We maintained they were creatures of Hanoi. We finally settled on a compromise that satisfied both sides, including Thieu, we believed. There were, of course, two sides to the negotiations, but each side would have the right to include anyone it wanted. The North Vietnamese informed us the NLF would participate on their side, and we informed them the Saigon government would participate on ours.

Then, to the President's surprise (we were aghast in Paris), at the last moment, Thieu refused. Clark Clifford, the Secretary of Defense, in his November 12 press conference, described in detail this unjustified action.

There seems to be little doubt that through one channel or another, Thieu was counseled to wait until after the American presidential election. He was evidently told Nixon would be much harder-line than Humphrey, and he was warned that if negotiations began,

Humphrey might be elected.

I don't in any way suggest that Richard Nixon knew anything about this. But some believe that if we had started actual negotiations during the week before Election Day, it might well have made a small, but vital, difference in the election. If Hubert Humphrey had been elected President, we would have been well out of Vietnam by now. I can say this with assurance because I am satisfied he would have appointed either George Ball or Clark Clifford his Secretary of State, and I know where they stood.

Between the election and inauguration, we worked hard to get negotiations going. I am not very good at making a case for the enemy, but the North Vietnamese did disengage in the two Northern provinces of I Corps. The fighting there nearly stopped. They took 90 percent of their troops out, and sent half of them above the 20th Parallel, some 200 miles to the north. It seemed clear to us that this was an invitation to reduce the level of fighting and perhaps work toward a cease-fire.

I felt the B-52's were an important negotiating weapon. Although the North Vietnamese never admitted the damage done, they did describe to us in Paris the terrific effect on morale of hell breaking loose from the sky without warning. I felt that in return for the stopping of B-52 raids, they might well agree to stop their terrorist activities at least in the cities, and their ambushing along the principal highways. From the North Vietnamese actions as well as what they said, I believe that had substantive negotiations begun in early November, as had been agreed to, progress in reducing the level of combat could have been made, permitting some troops to start home that year—1968.

Instead, even after President Thieu agreed to permit his representatives to join the talks in Paris, there was that undignified row about the table. The North Vietnamese were willing to accept a round table, which we in Paris had recommended. Historically, that has always been the way to avoid questions of protocol. Thieu refused, however, for the simple reason that he did not want to

have any substantive discussions before President Nixon came in. In fact, he tried to break up the discussions entirely until, as I understand it, President-elect Nixon sent word to him that he wanted the talks to continue.

Some people say the Russians won't help us out of Vietnam. I can say they did help us—in October, 1968. That is a fact. And they helped in January too. They didn't stop the war. They have only limited influence with Hanoi, but when we are moving toward an agreement, they can be of considerable help and can remove roadblocks.

But the Soviets won't try to force North Vietnam to accept our dictates. They look upon North Vietnam as what they call a "sister" Communist state. They feel they have an obligation, as the great leader of the Communist "camp," to support them.

When I left Paris in January, 1969, we had arranged that the two sides, with two on each side, would sit down privately and talk together. There is no doubt in my mind that President Thieu scuttled those negotiations, and he did it consciously. He announced on January 29 that he was not going to sit down in private, and one of his spokesmen said, "What we have got to tell the Communists, we have already told them in Paris, and it is not necessary to have private meetings with them." This was, of course, nonsense, because they knew that we got nowhere in those public discussions, and that whatever progress was made had to be made privately. So there were no private talks held among the four.

Our formal meetings were held at the Hotel Majestic, an official building of the French Government. Although the press was not admitted, these meetings were thoroughly publicized. Our private talks were conducted in secret by special arrangement. We held many of them over the months in secluded places. Although it became known to the press that there were private talks, no one knew when or where we met. Nor was there a leak from either side of a word we discussed.

My partner, Cy Vance, stayed on in Paris for a month, and during

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

The veteran diplomat W. Averell Harriman was formerly the Chief United States Negotiator at the Paris Peace Talks.

that period, Ambassador Lodge had no private talks on substantive matters. I understand he didn't attempt to have such private talks for two months. By that time, Thieu had "graciously" stated that he would sit down privately with the other side, but the chain was broken. Thieu had stated at the same time that under no circumstances would he agree to a coalition government, and under no circumstances would he agree to permit a Communist party in South Vietnam. These were prior conditions that the other side would not take. So that action by Thieu blocked progress in Paris.

Why should we give Thieu the right to dictate American policy? I can't conceive why anybody should give a veto to a foreign potentate, no matter who he is.

We should want to stop this fighting in Vietnam. To me, the Vietnamization of the war is an immoral thing. We have no right to perpetuate the fighting. Every effort should be made to end the human tragedy that is going on in South Vietnam.

Our political objectives in Vietnam cannot be achieved by military means. We can expand the war to include Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam and then China, and even the Soviet Union, but this war cannot be won. That is not the fault of the United States. It's the nature of the problem that exists there.

Unfortunately, this Administration has not concentrated its attention on negotiations but rather on military action.

On April 20, 1970, the President held out hope that a "just peace" was in sight, yet ten days later the war was expanded. There seems to be an idea that military blows can force the other side to negotiate on our terms. All our past experience in Vietnam shows that this is a delusion.

The Administration's program of Vietnamization of the war is not in my opinion a program for peace but is a program for the perpetuation of the war. At best, we can only hope for a reduction of less than half of our forces in South Vietnam two and a half years after this Administration took office. But after that, there is no assurance whether or when the balance of our forces will be withdrawn. The South Vietnamese troops are able to take on more of the load of our combat troops, but there is no indication that they can operate successfully without American air, artillery and logistic support.

Furthermore, the Vietnamization of the war is dependent on an unpopular and repressive military

government. With all of the military influence, President Thieu and Vice President Ky got less than 35 percent of the votes cast in 1967; over 60 percent of the votes were cast for civilian candidates who had some kind of peace plank in their platform. This election confirmed that the people of South Vietnam want peace and not a continuation of the war.

The senatorial elections this August gave further evidence of the desire of the people to end the war. The anti-war Buddhist slate, headed by Vu Van Mau, which reportedly emphasized peace through compromise, was among the three slates elected. It got more votes than even the leading pro-government slate backed by the government and the military. It is significant also that the other slates were beaten. The third winning group was anti-government on domestic issues.

I said on several occasions in Paris, with the approval of Washington, that the United States was against imposition of a government on the people of South Vietnam, either by Hanoi or Washington. I must say I stated that in the hope that it would have an influence in the United States as well as in North Vietnam. But now we find we are trying to impose this military regime on the people of South Vietnam. It is common knowledge that Thieu is putting a number of opposition leaders in jail—even a member of the Lower House, Tran Ngoc Chau, in violation of his constitutional immunity.

It's hard to envision a satisfactory solution unless Thieu does what we have tried to get him to do since 1967: broaden his government. He should rally the non-Communist forces, form an alliance representative of the majority of the people of South Vietnam. Big Minh, who was undoubtedly the most popular of the generals, is in this mood. I have talked to Senator Don, who was also a general, but is now a leader of the opposition in the Senate. The Buddhists, the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, the labor unions and other non-Communist groups must be brought in. (Thieu himself is a Catholic.) They are anxious to have an end to the war. They want to stay in their country. They know that a military victory can't be won, and they are ready to make a political settlement. But they need to organize together so as to be able to win the political contest that will come after the end of hostilities. That is what we ought to be concentrating on doing.

All our troops should be withdrawn from Vietnam—on a prompt,

announced schedule as proposed by former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford. This will compel the Thieu government to undertake seriously negotiations for a responsible settlement. Thieu must bring into his government the political elements desiring peace and send to Paris a team willing and able to negotiate with the NLF for a compromise solution. If this is done, I believe the other side will join in serious negotiations.

The assurance from us that we intend to remove our troops completely from South Vietnam is necessary to get the North Vietnamese to negotiate a reasonable compromise. Obviously, if Hanoi were recalcitrant, the President, I would hope, in consultation with the Senate, could hold up the withdrawal schedule.

Our withdrawal should be responsible, and I believe that it can be—without delaying the return of our troops. We helped set this country on fire, and we must help put it out. I have been convinced that the other side will agree to one vital point at least—that there will be no reprisals by either side, with supervision by an international body. Also we must make arrangements for the immediate return of our men who are prisoners of war. Other issues must be subject to negotiation among the Vietnamese themselves.

In the many private discussions I had with the North Vietnamese in Paris, there is one thing that I learned. They are fiercely nationalistic. They particularly want to be independent of China. With this in mind, they established friendly relations with the French after the war with France ended. Now, if our war can be ended, they want similar relations with the United States. Like Tito, they recognize the need for an alternative to being compelled to rely on their powerful Communist neighbor.

I therefore believe that it is important for us to come to an understanding with Hanoi. We must recognize that the North Vietnamese did not keep the Laos Agreement in 1962 for a single day, and some understanding must be reached that is to their interest to keep for a period of years. If we are to have peace in Southeast Asia, some understanding must be arrived at along the lines of President Johnson's Johns Hopkins speech of April, 1965, for reconstruction and regional development, with the participation of the North Vietnamese.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

The Worst Reported War

By S. L. A. Marshall

Times/Post News Service

UNTIL the Jordanian mess in September, it was a toss-up whether Vietnam or the Congo was the worst reported war in history.

Those two wretched examples of how modern communication speeds the flow of misinformation, rumor and propaganda at the expense of legitimate news now glitter by comparison.

Nothing dependable came out of Jordan while the heat was on. The horde of correspondents in Amman couldn't get their heads up. Most of them departed the scene on the first plane out to write and speak thereafter of their personal ordeal. Amman had lost all attraction, the Inter-continental Hotel having run out of gin.

What the world took for news was mainly the slanted stuff from Radio Amman and the exhortations of guerrilla leaders who exaggerated the Palestinian losses approximately tenfold and had their propaganda pitches amplified the globe over.

The object there is to tilt a

lance against some of the fables that became accepted during the event. Take first the story that King Hussein was a reluctant dragon forced to give battle to the Palestinians by his generals who had become desperate about the threat to their own futures.

Were that true, the generals would now wield the power. Hussein was ready to go at the Palestinians three weeks before he finally did and prior to the sky-jacking incident. He was restrained by his commanders who feared that the losses to Jordan's army would be excessive.

The genesis of the story that Hussein was the foot dragger purportedly lies in an army incident of this summer. Some of the younger officers appeared in formation wearing brassieres. "Because," they told his majesty, "you are making women of us."

True or false, the tale is still misleading. For it was Hussein who made the decision to fight in the end.

The Palestinians were hunted down and killed street by street and house by house. It was done mainly with point blank fire from tank-mounted cannon fire and machine guns, while the artillery was loosed against the refugee camps. The infantry did not move into an area until it had been shelled into quiescence.

This is a terrible and costly way to work over a city to rid it of a resistance mainly from small arms, when the seemingly logical alternative was a house-to-house search by riflemen and grenadiers. There was some method in this madness, however. Jordan's armor is crewed by Bedouins, who are still very loyal to the king. The bulk of the infantry is formed of Palestinians and was not to be trusted to carry the battle.

The Syrians felt that they had to intervene to help the Palestinians and draw the heat from Amman or else face riot and risk a possible coup in Damascus. Since Soviet trainers serve with the Syrian army down to battalion level, Moscow had to know and give assent. The Syrians, however, served notice that they were projecting only a "limited intervention."

They then put a division across the border, or more correctly, two armored brigades, a division headquarters group and a number of supporting attachments. Massing more than 300 tanks, that was hardly a "limited" show.

In the fighting around Irbid, the Syrians lost one-third of their armor through clumsy maneuvering and inept gunnery. The Jordanian armor, which is quite competent, got help from the Jordanian air, and lost only 23 tanks. Just one day after the threat appeared, it was already

near collapse.

At that juncture, the alternatives confronting Syria were to either reenforce the invading column in strength or pull it back in defeat. But Damascus had little choice in the matter.

The Soviets were already yanking at the Syrian coattails because the show had turned sour.

Gamal Abdel Nasser was putting the pressure on Damascus to pull back the force, strictly because the intervention had placed him in a bind. If Syria stayed in and he didn't move, he would be shamed before the Arab world and accused of walking out on the Syrians.

There was no other way for Nasser to actively support Syria except to throw his army at Suez and try to win a bridgehead, and he wasn't ready for any such gamble. The fact is that Nasser was quite content with the cease-fire situation and was ready to extend it had he not died. Egyptians were turning bitter and had become increasingly critical of the regime due to the continuing losses around Suez.

Such are the circumstances that dissolved the crisis to the advantage, at least temporarily, of Hussein; Israel and U.S. policy. The irony is that when everyone breathed easier, Cairo and Moscow were officially blessed as the peacemakers. For months they have leagued in big mischief-making and now they come smelling like roses.

VIETNAMIZATION IS IMMORAL, CONTINUED

Events have made this more difficult. The Red Chinese have consistently taken a negative position on a peaceful solution in the area. China's influence, I believe, was at its lowest point in 1968. Developments following the overthrow of Sihanouk and our intervention in Cambodia have lifted Chinese influence to a new high.

The Administration's Cambodian policy has exposed its present aim in Vietnam as well as in Cambodia. It is to attempt to support pro-Western military governments regardless of local opposition. This is quite impossible of permanent achievement without the continued presence of large United States forces in Vietnam and a perpetuation of the fighting. Aside from North Vietnam, these countries are so close to the Chinese border that this policy is provocative and will be interpreted by Red China as a threat to its security. If we looked at the area dispassionately, we could not avoid the conclusion that neutral, nonaligned governments are the best we can expect, and are in the long run compatible with our interests.

We have been told that "our will and character" are being tested by our actions in Indochina. That is not correct. What is being tested is our judgment and the wisdom of our purpose.

Here at home, I believe student unrest and the generation gap were widened by disillusion over Vietnam. In the view of many students, if the older generation could be so unwise and immoral about this war, they must be basically responsible for other wrongs in our society.

I am not suggesting that stopping the war tomorrow would end campus unrest, but it would be the first important step in that direction. Unhappily, President Nixon has scorned student opinion on Vietnam, and this has led to increased campus tensions.

It is easy to be destructive. I reject the rock throwers and the burners. They not only destroy, but their excesses play into the hands of the most reactionary. However, I have profound respect for students who are taking constructive action.

The reality of the situation is that we have wasted many months. The tragedy of lost American lives, the tragedy of the division of our country, the tragedy of the diversion of resources that we ought to be applying to the many urgent needs in this country should be brought to an end.

But if policies giving Thieu a veto are continued, there is no end to the war. The idea that Vietnamization is going to force the North Vietnamese to negotiate on our terms is nonsense. The hope that if the American people stand behind the Vietnamization of the war, Hanoi will give in just doesn't make any sense.

Some people talk about an "honorable" settlement. Are we trying to save our face and our military honor? No! We have responsibility and I am for a responsible withdrawal. There must and there can be agreement on no reprisals and on immediate return of our prisoners. We have to stop the killing. We have an obligation to do so. The kind of America I believe in would do that.

END

Russian Navy infiltrates Indian Ocean

AIM IS TO OUTFLANK RED CHINA

Almost unnoticed the waters around South East Asia have become studied with Soviet warships. Two or three years ago their presence would have been as big a surprise as a Malaysian junk on Lake Baikal.

Observers believe that this is the start of a large outflanking movement. When the Suez Canal is reopened this will form a link with Russian bases in the Mediterranean. In this context Moscow's role in the Middle East gains a new perspective.

The Soviet encirclement is directed against China whose latest diplomatic moves threaten to outdo the Russians in South East Asia, an area where the balance of power is still uncertain.

The Russian Navy paid its first official visits to South East Asia in 1968. Last year two naval units put in at Madras, Colombo, Bombay, Basra and other ports.

It is thought that Moscow has ordered ten to fourteen of its warships and submarines to cruise through South East Asian waters as constant observers.

The Russians are about to build a number of artificial floating bases where their ships can dock for repairs or refuelling. Negotiations are in progress on making the British Navy's large docks in Singapore available to Soviet ships "on a commercial basis".

The extension to the Russian presence can also be felt in the Far East. Russian intelligence ships regularly follow the manoeuvres of the United States Seventh Fleet.

Russian naval units are also operating in Korean, Japanese and North Pacific waters. The Japanese Defence Bureau estimates that the naval base in Vladivostok is the home port of twenty nuclear submarines, eighty conventional submarines and fifty other warships.

Vladivostok is also the starting point

for naval units taking part in the annual manoeuvres in the Straits of Okinawa.

Every month the Russian Air Force logs twenty intelligence flights at various heights along the Japanese coast. Added to the increase in flying activity, there is also the fact that Moscow has been maintaining two missile bases in the People's Republic of Mongolia for the past two years. They are aimed at the American bases on Okinawa and the Japanese mainland.

The Indian Ocean is the centre of present Soviet expansion. At the beginning of July it was announced that Moscow had concluded a secret agreement with the island state of Mauritius that lies in an advantageous strategic position.

Diplomatic observers believe that the supply facilities guaranteed Russian ships in the "Fisheries Agreement" will be used for more than commercial purposes.

The Russians, Japanese and Americans are building a harbour complex costing 130 million dollars in Visakhapatnam in the East of the Bay of Bengal between Calcutta and Madras.

While the private capital invested by the Japanese and the Americans is being used to build harbour facilities for the mercantile marine as well as a number of industrial projects, the Russians are building the naval base that is part of the complex.

The Indian Navy is to receive service from Russia for ships bought in the Soviet Union, at present three submarines and five destroyer escort vessels.

The advantages for the Russians in having a supply base of their own in this area are as obvious as the denials from the Indian side are firm. The same is true of the base being built in Vizag on the Andamans for the "Eastern Naval Command" of the Indian fleet.

The Indian Navy does not feel all that comfortable in the embrace of the Russian bear. It recently scrapped a two-year submarine training programme that cost the Indian taxpayer 350 dollars per man per month. Russian submarines are built for colder waters, fall easy prey to technical damage and delivery dates are rarely kept.

Both Russians and Indians believe that they must fill the power gap left by the evacuation by Britain of its bases East of Suez, a result of the policy of the last Labour government.

This situation, closely watched by Tokyo and Washington, has however changed since Edward Heath's Conservative government took over power in Britain.

Lord Carrington's recent visit to the capitals of Commonwealth countries in South East Asia showed that Britain does not plan to give up its commitments in the area but would like to come to a compromise with Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand in the form of a consultative agreement in security affairs.

The spate of diplomatic activity by the Chinese in recent months has cramped Moscow's room for manoeuvre still further and undermined Russian influence in North Korea and Hanoi.

Leonid Brezhnev's plan for a South East Asian security system did not even meet with the support of India, still Russia's closest partner in this part of the world.

Meanwhile busy Japanese salesmen have established themselves with increasing success in South East Asia with their idea of a consumer-orientated affluence as an alternative to the temptation of Communism.

Moscow feels the pinch and is playing a waiting game with its fleet.

P. Crome

TIME MAGAZINE 9 November 1970 (5)

SALT: The Third Round

IN the midst of new uncertainties in U.S.-Soviet relations, the third round of the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) opens this week in the Finnish capital of Helsinki. Negotiators expect it to last only about six weeks, all but ruling out any formal agreement on the enormously complex subject. The U.S. is hopeful nonetheless that the Soviets will reply to the comprehensive arms plan presented by the Nixon Administration last June.

Under it, the U.S. and the Soviet Union would place an upper limit on the total number of their strategic weapons systems. Each side would be free to choose its own mix within that limit.

At present the U.S. holds a lead in heavy bombers and SLBMs (sea-launched ballistic missiles). The Soviet Union is ahead in the number of intercontinental, medium- and in-

termediate-range ballistic missiles and medium bombers (see chart). Two problems that could complicate the final equation, however, have not yet come up for discussion:

► Both sides are moving ahead with the development of MIRV (multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles), a system that arms a single rocket with several warheads. Its de-

ployment, undetectable by most monitoring procedures, could make a final agreement impossible.

► The Nixon plan provides for parity in delivery systems but not in megatonnage. Because some Soviet rockets are so much larger (some SS-9s pack 25 megatons v. five megatons for Titan 2, the biggest American ICBM), the Soviets would probably come out with more firepower. Each side, however, would still possess more than enough megatonnage to destroy the other.

